

God's Lost and Found Luke 15:1-32

by David Servant

God's love is immediate, compassionate, and celebratory, and encourages us to rejoice in repentance and be merciful toward sinners.

Scripture: Luke 15:1, Luke 15:31, Romans 3:23, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Gods Love", "Repentance"

Description

David Servant preaches on the compassionate and loving nature of Jesus, highlighting how He spent time with sinners to show God's value for all people. Jesus emphasized the need for everyone, including self-righteous Pharisees, to recognize their own sinfulness and need for salvation. Through the parable of the lost son, Jesus teaches about the importance of repentance and the Father's unconditional love and forgiveness towards those who return to Him. The story also illustrates the danger of spiritual pride and the blessings of remaining obedient to God.

Transcript

Today we read of another fault the Pharisees and religious teachers found in Jesus: He spent time with sinful people. This once more strengthens our belief that Jesus was sinless, because the only faults anyone could find in Him weren't faults at all, they were virtues. Jesus explained why He spent time with sinners: they were valued by God, just as a lost sheep is to a shepherd and a lost coin is to a woman who owns ten coins.

The Pharisees who criticized Jesus were self-righteous, and were actually just as lost as the people they condemned as being sinners. Jesus considered everyone to be a sinner who needs to be saved, but those who didn't think they were sinners could never be saved, because they thought they already were!

The story of the lost son was really a story about the bad attitude of the older brother, who represented the Pharisees. The younger son was definitely guilty, but he repented before his father, who received him back with rejoicing and a feast. His son had been lost, but was back home where he belonged. The older brother became angry when he saw how gracious his father was toward his brother. He had always obeyed his father and never had received a similar party. To him it didn't seem fair.

Every time I read this story, I always feel myself siding with the older brother. If my father did what his father had done, I would probably react the same way. But when I put myself in the shoes of the father, I'm sure I would do just what he did for his repentant son. There were two different perspectives in the matter,

and we must realize that our God has the father's perspective. He loves all of His own, so we should adopt His attitude and rejoice when He blesses someone who has recently repented after committing big sins, even if we feel like God is showing favoritism. Of course, God shows no favoritism, but like the father in the story, He can't help but express His love when a repentant son returns home.

Q. If the younger brother was so graciously received and restored when he returned home, was there any advantage for the older brother to have stayed home, remaining obedient to his father all those years?

A. Absolutely. Everything the father owned was divided between his two sons. The younger of the two had wasted his entire inheritance, but the older brother still possessed all of his. That is why his father reminded him, "Everything I have is yours" (Luke 15:31b). The wayward son, although blessed to be restored, would regret all his life what he did with his inheritance. He would never have another opportunity to receive it again. And the older brother could use his inheritance to have as many feasts with his friends as he wanted.

Q. How do you think Jesus feels about Christians who look down on sinful people who are not Christians?

A. He knows they are guilty of spiritual pride. All of us were sinners at one time who needed a Savior. We were no different than the sinful people we now look down upon, except that we heard and believed the gospel and God forgave and changed us. We need to be merciful toward sinners as God is.

Application: Did you notice the father's love for his repentant son in today's final story? When the returning son was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. He had been hoping and longing for his son's return, always looking into the distance. He didn't wait for his son to make it to him. Rather, he ran to his son, filled with love and compassion. When they met, he didn't wait for his son's confession, but immediately embraced and kissed him. When his son confessed his sin, he didn't scold him to make him feel worse, but immediately called for the finest robe, a ring for his finger, sandals for his feet and a great feast in celebration. Does that help you understand God's loves?

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